



THE NEW JERSEY ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



1ST NJ CONGRESS UNITES EFFORTS OF ITALIAN AMERICANS

The Commission and the New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation hosted an impressive statewide Congress for members of Italian American organizations, politicians, dignitaries, teachers, and students on Saturday, October 23rd at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. The event, whose theme was *"Unifying the Efforts of Italian American Organizations,"* marked an historical meeting of more than 500 participants throughout the state of New Jersey to network and discuss issues affecting the Italian American community. "This 1st Congress provided attendees with an unprecedented opportunity to network, meet and coordinate organizational activities with other Italian Americans," commented Commission Chairman, N. Larry Paragano. "The Congress raised public awareness of the issues



L to R: Chairman Paragano, Vice Consul of Italy Paolo Toschi and Advisory Council Chairman Gargione.



Officers of Italia-Oggi, the largest young professional Italian American organization in NJ, include President Peter Tarquinio, second left, and Vice-President Lori Mastrosimone, center.



From Left to Right: Governor James Florio, Commissioner Richard Bilotti, Commission Chairman Larry Paragano and Governor Donald DiFrancesco.

faced by Italian American groups in promoting Italian heritage."

Participants in this initiative included former Governors Donald DiFrancesco and James Florio, Italian Counsel General Antonio Bandini of New York, former Italian Counsel General of Philadelphia Lorenzo Mott, Italian Vice Counsel Paolo Toschi of Newark and Honorary Vice Counsel to Italy (Trenton) Gilda Rorro. Also in attendance were leading members of the National Italian American Foundation, UNICO, the Order of the Sons of Italy in America, and leaders of 75 Italian organizations.

The program consisted of a variety of panels and working sessions that focused on promoting the Italian heritage, including: combating stereotypes and discrimination, developing an Italian American political caucus, promoting the Italian language in New Jersey, and fostering the Italian heritage for future generations. In the afternoon, exhibit tables were opened, book

lectures and signings were held and musical entertainment was provided by the Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra and Alex Kariotis' Italian rock opera from his off-Broadway musical.

Additionally, over one hundred teachers, students, and parents were in attendance to discuss youth programs, scholarships, and educational exchanges for Italian programs in New Jersey schools.

"The Commission was extremely happy with the large number and variety of people. We were especially encouraged by the ideas that they raised throughout the day," added Vice Chairman Angelo Morresi. "The Congress generated a wave of enthusiasm for future initiatives impacting the Italian American community."

The Congress success resulted in unanimous resolutions passed by the delegates to host the 2nd Congress on October 29, 2005. Please contact the Commission to help organize the 2nd Congress.



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Chairman's Message

"A Country is not a mere territory; it is the sentiment of love, the sense of fellowship which binds together all the sons of that territory."-Giuseppe Mazzini

During this past year, 2004, the Commission has made great strides in organizing and promoting Italian Heritage throughout the State of New Jersey. The key to success has been the involvement of the Italian American community. Together, we have witnessed an impressive increase in the rate of participation and the coordination of efforts by Italian organizations.

In April, over 1,000 people were registered for the April 25th Italian Liberation Day Commemoration at the Governor's Mansion, where 3 former Governors honored our heritage and representatives from the Italian Government and the Vatican spoke of our bonds of friendship with the Italian people.



Commission Chairman Larry Paragano

In September, the Commission launched the first pilot NJ school curriculum on Italian Heritage in 9 school districts throughout NJ.

In October, over 500 leaders of Italian American community joined together for the 1st NJ Congress of Italian American Organizations to work on issues.

Together, we can continue this momentum and strive to unify our efforts. Please join us in this new "Risorgimento" movement in NJ.

Commission Upcoming Events

- **March 18, 2005 (Friday)**
Italian Heritage Day – Student conference at Rutgers organized by ITANJ
- **March 19, 2005 (Saturday)**
4th Italian American Leadership Convocation – Half-day conference at Camden Community College
- **March 31, 2005 (Thursday)**
"Women's Work: Labor Movement in NJ and NY" – Teacher development workshop at Montclair State
- **April 23, 2005 (Saturday)** –
Italian Liberation Day – Public Ceremonies at Rutgers University in New Brunswick
- **May 17, 2005 (Tuesday)** –
Business Conference on Italy – Professional conference on doing business with Italy

Discrimination Conference at Seton Hall

The Charles and Joan Alberto Italian Studies Institute at Seton Hall hosted a conference entitled "REAL STORIES: Discrimination and Defamation in the History of Italian Americans" on Saturday, December 4, 2004 at Seton Hall University. The conference, which was co-sponsored by the Commission and other Italian American organizations, consisted of daylong discussion panels devoted to examining the history of discrimination against Italian Americans. Speakers reviewed current media and academic topics, discussing why negative images of Italian Americans have proved remarkably enduring, even as

Italian Americans have prospered and assimilated into mainstream society. Over 290 prominent Italian American politicians, government officials, actors and entrepreneurs were in attendance.

Commission Chairman Larry Paragano was impressed with the variety of topics discussed at the conference and praised the hard work of fellow Commissioner, Dr. William Connell, in orchestrating this event. "The conference covered every area imaginable from politics to the movies, from everyday life to the business world. Dr. Connell created the perfect forum to showcase the problems of discrimination faced by Italian



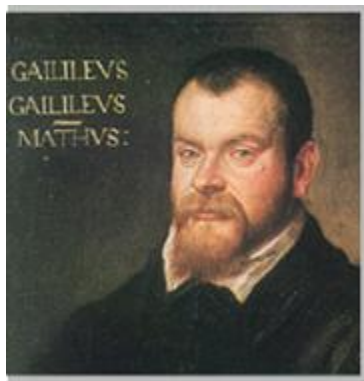
Italian Studies at Seton Hall University Americans and the progress needed to change attitudes and perspectives."

The Commission also wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the NJ Italian American Heritage Foundation, UNICO National, the OneVoice Committee, the Order of the Sons of Italy in America and the speakers, participants and attendees for making this important event possible.



Age of Galileo at Rutgers

The Italian Studies Committee of Rutgers University, together with the Commission and the New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation, hosted a major public symposium on the global influence of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). Organized by Dr. Catherine Puglisi, the symposium brought together leading scholars in the fields of art history, comparative literature, and the history and philosophy of science to explore his wide-ranging impact on both the arts and science of his day. The morning session was devoted primarily to Galileo's considerable scientific works and contributions. The afternoon focused on Galileo's influence on European culture.



Age of Galileo Symposium at Rutgers

Community Outreach

As part of its effort to reach out to the Italian American community in NJ, the Commission initiated a series of presentations in 2005. Each month, the Commission arranges visits to the meetings of Italian American organizations, in order to better understand the work, programs and events of the over 400 NJ Italian organizations.

This one-day symposium marked the culmination of a broader celebration of the life and works of Galileo, which was held at Rutgers University during the week of October 25-October 31, 2004. Other events included the Mason Gross Lecture on October 27, "Galileo, Artist and Scientist," by Dava Sobel, author of *Galileo's Daughter*; a screening of Joseph Losey's acclaimed 1975 film "Bertolt Brecht's Galileo," on October 27; "Reading the Cosmos: Printed Books in the Age of Galileo," an exhibition of rare, scientific texts from the 17th century from Rutgers University; and a concert, "Opera in the Time of Galileo" on October 31.

This important public event highlighted one of the most significant Italian contributors to global science and culture. To ensure that his work is widely understood, especially by young people, the Commission developed a lesson plan for the Curriculum Project about the nature of his empirical analysis, which will not only promote his work as a scientist and a thinker, but as a positive Italian role model.



Association of Italian American Educators Meets with Commission

These discussions enable local organizations to learn about the Commissioners. To invite the Commission, please contact us.

CAVOUR'S COLUMN

During the 19th century period in Europe known as the "Age of Nations", people from all parts of the Italian peninsula came together under the Italian flag. This national movement, known as the Risorgimento, formally lasted from 1861-1871.



By A. Roger
Marinzoli

Executive Director
of the New Jersey
Italian and Italian
American Heritage
Commission

This Column is named after Cavour, founder of "Il Risorgimento", the 1847 Italian Newspaper, which promoted Italian unity, heritage and identity.

This process of achieving unified statehood was protracted, sometimes bloody, but always about recognizing the common heritage of the Italian people.

In NJ today, the approximately 2 million Italian Americans are being faced with eroding cultural traditions, a loss of ancestral language and repeated media images of negative stereotyping. To challenge these issues, our NJ Italian American community is coordinating efforts to promote and preserve the Italian heritage. While once accused of not being able to work together, the Italian American community is rapidly unifying, as we recognize our goals and our shared strengths.

In NJ now, I see the spirit of the Risorgimento again being harnessed. I am optimistic that we will proudly band together to promote the virtues and celebrate the achievements of our great heritage for our ancestors, for ourselves, and for our children.



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Italian Curriculum in Schools



Verona High School: 1st Pilot School

After two years of extensive development, the Commission's Italian Heritage Curriculum Project initiated piloting this winter in 9 school districts across New Jersey. Led by Commissioner Gilda Rorro, Ed.D., the Curriculum Development Committee of the Commission launched the pilot program (Phase One) of the "Universality of Italian Heritage" Curriculum Project. Phase One features 16 lesson plans, written by teachers throughout the State, and offers 6th to 12th graders the opportunity to learn about the

important contributions of Italian and Italian Americans to our society.

The project, which is voluntary, involves over 100 participating teachers and 3,000 students who are now learning about topics such as the Justinian Code, Galileo's work, Da Vinci's writing style, Palladian & Roman architecture, Italian immigration, the contribution of Mazzei to the Declaration of Independence and about World War II's "Storia Segreta".

Currently, the school districts that have welcomed the curriculum for the field trial include: Verona, S. Hackensack, Discovery Charter in Newark, Trenton, Old Bridge, Hamilton, Princeton, Hammonton, Delcea, and Toms River. Additional schools will be invited as the project develops in 2005.

The New Jersey Institute of Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies, located at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, is the operational body of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission for program implementation and administration. The Commission, located in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Education, was created pursuant to the enactment of P.L. 2001, Chapter 343 C.18A4-42 and signed into law on in January 2002. The Institute, a 501.c.3. entity with statewide jurisdiction, is charged with providing services to the public at large, as well as public, non-profit and other public service institutions in all twenty-one counties in New Jersey

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